

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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O R 121605Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9473
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
USSOUTHCOM
AMCONSUL BARRANQUILLA POUCH
AMCONSUL CALI POUCH
AMCONSUL MEDELLIN POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 7584

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CO
SUBJ: POLITICAL SUMMARIES: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY: THE INAUGURATION OF JULIO CESAR TURBAY AS COLOMBIA'S NEW PRESIDENT DREW RENEWED ATTENTION TO COLOMBIA AS ONE OF LATIN AMERICA'S FEW FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACIES. IN HIS HOUR-LONG INAUGURAL ADDRESS, TURBAY OUTLINED HIS ADMINISTRATION'S PROGRAM, STRESSING LAW AND ORDER PROBLEMS. THE NEW PRESIDENT ALSO NAMED HIS CABINET AND MADE OTHER IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS, TAKING TIME OUT TO MEET WITH THE US INAUGURAL DELEGATIONS' PRINCIPAL MEMBERS, INCLUDING ITS HEAD, TREASURY SECRETARY BLUMENTHAL. THE INAUGURATION FESTIVITIES GAVE THE US PRINCIPALS A CHANCE TO MEET ALSO WITH VISITING FOREIGN LEADERS. ANDEAN PEAK LEADERS ON HAND FOR THE OCCASION HELD A BRIEF SUMMIT MEETING. TERRORIST GROUPS WERE ACTIVE DURING THE PERIOD, BUT DID NOT SUCCEED IN DISRUPTING THE PROCEEDINGS. END SUMMARY.

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2. TURBAY ASSUMES OFFICE. ON AUG 7, JULIO CESAR TURBAY AYALA FORMALLY ASSUMED THE PRESIDENCY OF COLOMBIA FOR A TERM OF OFFICE THAT IS TO END IN 1982. SOME 50 FOREIGN DELEGATIONS ATTENDED THE INAUGURATION. THE US DELEGATION WAS HEADED BY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY BLUMENTHAL AND INCLUDED ASST SECY OF STATE FOR INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS VAKY (SEE PARAGRAPH 3 BELOW). OTHER IMPORTANT VISITORS WERE VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT

PEREZ, BOLIVIAN PRESIDENT PEREDA, PRESIDENT OF THE ECUADORIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT POVEDA, CHIEF OF THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT TORRIJOS, PERUVIAN PREMIER MOLINA AND FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE PRESIDIO OF THE USSR SUPREME SOVIET KUZNETSOV. IN AN HOUR-LONG INAUGURAL ADDRESS, TURBAY OUTLINED HIS ADMINISTRATION'S PROGRAM IN SOME DETAIL (BOGOTA 7431). HIS REMARKS INDICATED THAT, WITH RESPECT TO BOTH THE DOMESTIC SCENE AND FOREIGN RELATIONS, HIS ADMINISTRATION WILL BE MORE ACTIVE THAN THAT OF HIS PREDECESSOR REVIEWING THE STATE OF COLOMBIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE US, THE PRESIDENT DECLARED THAT, UNDER HIS GOVERNMENT, THE FIGHT AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING WOULD TAKE THE FORM OF A "RELENTLESS CRUSADE." LATER IN THE DAY, TURBAY MADE KNOWN THE COMPOSITION OF HIS CABINET (BOGOTA 7445). OF THE 13 MINISTERS NAMED, 7 ARE LIBERALS, 5 CONSERVATIVES, AND ONE, THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, A MILITARY MAN (SEE PARAGRAPH 4). OTHER HIGH-LEVEL APPOINTMENTS WERE ALSO ANNOUNCED, INCLUDING THAT OF FORMER MINISTER OF EDUCATION HERNANDO DURAN DUSSAN AS MAYOR OF BOGOTA. COMMENT: TURBAY'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS LAID GREAT STRESS ON PROBLEMS OF LAW AND ORDER AND ON STRONG ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE TO COUNTER SUCH PROBLEMS. IN PRIVATE TALKS WITH SECRETARY BLUMENTHAL, ASST SECY VAKY AND THE AMBASSADOR, TOO, THE PRESIDENT MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE INTENDS TO BE TOUGH. APPARENTLY, TO JUDGE BY A RECENT CONVERSATION BETWEEN AN EMBASSY OFFICER AND TWO LIBERAL PARTY POLITICIANS, THE WORD HAS BEEN PASSED ON TO THE LOWER ECHELONS OF GOVERNMENT. DURAN DUSSAN'S
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APPOINTMENT IS THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL OF THOSE ANNOUNCED TO DATE, BOTH BECAUSE OF HIS VOLATILE, AGGRESSIVE PERSONALITY AND BECAUSE, WHILE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, HE SPONSORED LEGISLATION HAVING TO DO WITH TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS THAT WAS BITTERLY RESENTED BY THE TEACHING PROFESSION. AMONG THE OTHER APPOINTMENTS, THAT OF INDALECIO LIEVANO AS FOREIGN MINISTER IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS TEMPORARY; IT IS BELIEVED THAT HE WILL BE RETAINED IN THAT POST UNTIL DECEMBER AT THE LATEST.

3. TREASURY SECRETARY HEADS U.S. INAUGURAL DELEGATION. TREASURY SECRETARY BLUMENTHAL LED THE U.S. DELEGATION TO TURBAY'S INAUGURATION. U.S. DELEGATES INCLUDED ASST SECY VAKY AND SEVEN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVES APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT, AS WELL AS AMBASSADOR ASECIO. SECY BLUMENTHAL, ASST SECY VAKY, AND AMB ASECIO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE OCCASION TO HOLD TALKS WITH SEVERAL VISITING FOREIGN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING VENEZUELA'S PEREZ (BOGOTA 7383, 7427 AND 7428), ECUADOR'S POVEDA (BOGOTA 7446), BOLIVIA'S PEREDA (BOGOTA 7387), THE SOVIET UNION'S KUZNETSOV, THE CHILEAN FOREIGN MINISTER, AND MEXICO'S FINANCE MINISTER (BOGOTA 7411), AS WELL AS WITH VARIOUS COLOMBIAN OFFICIALS, SUCH AS PRESIDENT TURBAY, FOREIGN

MINISTER LIEVANO, AND FORMER PRESIDENTS ALFONSO LOPEZ
AND CARLOS LLERAS (SEPTELS).

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BOGOTA 7584

4. NEW MILITARY AND POLICE COMMANDERS NAMED. IN ADDITION
TO NAMING ARMY GENERAL LUIS CARLOS CAMACHO LEYVA AS MINISTER
OF DEFENSE, COLOMBIA'S NEW PRESIDENT ALSO MADE THE FOLLOWING
MILITARY AND POLICE APPOINTMENTS: ARMED FORCES COMMANDER - ARMY
GEN JAIME SARMIENTO SARMIENTO; ARMY COMMANDER - GEN JORGE
ROBLEDO PULIDO; CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF -
ARMY GEN JOS GONZALO FORERO DELGADILLO; NAVY COMMANDER -
ADM GILBERTO BARONA SILVA; CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS - VICE ADM
BANJAMIN ALZATE REYES; NATIONAL POLICE DIRECTOR - MAJOR
GEN PABLO ALFONSO ROSAS GUARIN; AND NATIONAL POLICE SUB-
DIRECTOR - BRIG GEN FRANCISCO JOSE NARANJO. IT WAS
ANNOUNCED THAT AIR FORCE COMMANDER GEN ALFONSO RODRIGUEZ
RUBIANO WOULD CONTINUE IN THAT POSITION. COMMENT:
FORMER NAVY COMMANDER ADM DIAZ OSORIO REPORTEDLY WAS MIFFED AT
HAVING BEEN PASSED OVER FOR THE ARMED FORCES
COMMANDER SPOT. GIVEN THE COLOMBIAN TRADITION, ACCORDING
TO WHICH THE DOMINANT SERVICE IS THE ARMY, HE COULD HARDLY
HAVE EXPECTED OTHERWISE, HOWEVER. WHILE THIS SITUATION
NATURALLY EXACERBATES THE USUAL ARMY-NAVY RIVALRY,
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THE PROBLEM IS NOT BELIEVED TO PRESENT SERIOUS
DIFFICULTIES FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION.

5. COLOMBIA HOSTS ANDEAN PACT SUMMIT. FOLLOWING THE
INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT TURBAY, LEADERS OF THE ANDEAN
PACT COUNTRIES PRESENT IN BOGOTA HELD A SUMMIT MEETING
(SEE PARAGRAPH 2 ABOVE). THIS MEETING RESULTED IN THE
ISSUANCE OF THE DECLARATION OF BOGOTA, A DOCUMENT REAFFIRMING
THE LEADERS' ATTACHMENT TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PACT AND
STATING THE MEMBER COUNTRIES' CONCERN ABOUT THE LACK OF PROGRESS
IN ESTABLISHING A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER. IN THE LATT-
ER CONNECTION, THE DECLARATION CITED REGRESSIVE SIGNS SUCH AS
THOSE MANIFESTED AT THE RECENT BONN SUMMIT MEETING OF THE INDUS-
TRIALIZED COUNTRIES. COMMENT: THERE IS LITTLE NEW IN THE DEC-
LARATION EXCEPT FOR A CALL TO CREATE AN ANDEAN TRIBUNAL OF
JUSTICE WHICH WOULD HAVE COMPETENCY OVER INTERNAL ANDEAN PACT
AFFAIRS. THE DECLARATION IS SIGNIFICANT, HOWEVER, IN THAT,
DESPITE RECENT CHANGES AT THE TOP IN THREE COUNTRIES, THE
ANDEAN PACT COUNTRY LEADERS HAVE REITERATED THEIR COMMIT-
MENT TO THE PACT. IN PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH ASST SECY VAKY,
BOTH TURBAY AND PEREZ EXPRESSED OPTIMISM ABOUT THE PACT'S
PROSPECTS (SEE BOGOTA 7475).

6. TERRORIST ACTIONS FAIL TO DISRUPT INAUGURATION. IN CALI,
THE 19TH OF APRIL MOVEMENT (M-19) KIDNAPPED THE SON OF A
FORMER PRESIDENT, BUT HELD HIM FOR ONLY TWO HOURS. THE PRO-
CHINESE POPULAR LIBERATION ARMY (EPL) CONTINUED ITS ATTACKS
IN THE TIERRA ALTA REGION OF CORDOBA DEPARTMENT WITH AN ASSAULT
ON SANTA FE DE RALITO. DURING THE EVENING OF AUG 5, FOUR
SMALL BOMBS EXPLODED IN BOGOTA. THE EPL CLAIMED RESPON-
SIBILITY FOR THE VIOLENCE, WHICH OCCURRED NEAR THE NEWLY RE-
MODELED PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. THERE WERE NO INJURIES, AND NO
ADDITIONAL BOMBINGS MARRED THE AUG 7 INAUGURATION.
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